

of food and nutrition related programmes such as Integrated Child Development Services, Mid-day Meal Scheme, Food for Work Programme, Targeted Public Distribution System etc., which improve the nutrition status of population. These programmes are being implemented in collaboration with the State Governments.

(c) A number of NGOs are working in the area of food security, nutrition and livelihood issues. NGOs were consulted before finalizing the Approach Paper to the Eleventh Five Year Plan and they are also nominated in the various Working Groups and Steering Committee set up for the Eleventh Plan.

Regional imbalance in States

352. SHRI SURENDRA LATHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had conducted any study to find regional imbalances in respect of Orissa and other States;

(b) whether it is a fact that despite several central plans and Centrally Sponsored Schemes, regional imbalances in several districts of Orissa did not change;

(c) if so, whether Government have any plan to enhance the allocation of funds in Central plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes for backward districts of the State; and

(d) whether Government have evaluated the Revised Long Term Action Plan (RLTAP) in Orissa and if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) No, Sir. The planning and development of an area and allocation of funds within a State are primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned.

(b) The Union Government, on its part, supplements the efforts of the State Governments through weightage in the formula use of distribution of Central assistance, Special Area Programmes and various poverty alleviation and other Centrally Sponsored Schemes. However, despite various efforts made through the Five Year Plans to address the problems relating to regional imbalances, imbalances in regional development in

Orissa and also in other States continue owing to varied factors such as differences in resource endowment, historical and geographical factors, development of infrastructure, etc.

(c) Efforts are being made to address the problem relating to regional imbalance through the Backward Regions Grant Fund initiated in the current financial year replacing the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana.

(d) The Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) have launched the evaluation study of the Special Plan for the KBK districts of Orissa in the field in the current year.

Rank in Human Development Index

353. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

SHRI B.J. PANDAI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India ranks 126th on Human Development Index;

(b) if so, the salient features of this report so far it relates to India; and

(c) the action plan of Government to address these issues so far as these relate to the backward regions of the country, i.e. Orissa, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand etc?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes, Sir. According to the Human Development Report 2006 entitled "Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crises", released by the UNDP, India is placed at 126th position on Human Development Index (HDI) amongst 177 countries.

(b) The Report highlights the crucial need to reduce the health costs of the low income groups by addressing the vast deficits in water and sanitation. It explains the "water-sanitation-hygiene benefits loop", wherein provision of clean water and sanitation including personal hygiene form the foundation for any strategy to enhance public health. Regarding water distribution, the Report mentions the need to reduce inequalities between the the rural and urban areas, ethnic groups and regions.